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AUTHOR Shachter, Jaqueline
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ABSTRACT

Intended as a guide in choosing books for use in bibliotherapy, this annotated bibliography lists selections that stress the development of self-image. An account of the author's personal experience with the materials introduces each section. The bibliography is divided according to the following headings: overcoming physical disabilities, courage, friendship, family living, and growing up. Both fiction and nonfiction are included and the books are arranged by level (lower grades, middle grades, and upper grades). (MAI)

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Jaqueline Shachter

Temple University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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SELF-IMAGE BOOKS AS "SOUL FOOD"

The "soul food" on my mind is the kind that will ease a lump in the throat. Everyone suffers the pain of rejection, loss, insecurity, or fear from time to time. For some the pain may be more enduring than for others. A healing balm or suggestions for possible solutions to problems may come from characters in literature. Treatment of personal difficulties through the proper books is what is implied in the term, "bibliotherapy." Matching troubled children to the books they need depends upon the teacher's or librarian's dual awareness: of the emotional state of each person in the classroom and of suitable books with impact.

Often the books presented are related to but not identical with the child's source of frustration, material he or she will find more acceptable than if the private wound were exposed. For example, I once taught a small elementary class of emotionally-disturbed children. The least-adjusted pupil, Julia, an attractive ash blonde girl with hazel eyes, was ashamed of her hearing aid. As a result, she often removed the aid at recess. When she could not hear what her peers were saying and communicate in their games, they began to play with others. A pout became the lingering expression on her face. Julia also used the hearing aid as a weapon. She dramatically removed it when she did not want to hear instructions.

A parent conference revealed that Julia came from a family--father, mother, and younger brother--who were totally deaf and communicated only through sign language or writing. I began to break down Julia's resistance to use of the hearing aid through privately sharing Marguerite Vance's

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Windows for Rosemary. This book for grades 3-4 concerns a recently-blinded girl who learns to read braille.

The blind girl previously was called "handicapped." This word is possibly derived from an early period when the disabled had no choice but to beg in the streets, cap in hand. Now the preferred term is "disabled."

Some of the values in books about the disabled can be strengthening for able-bodied readers. Here is how writer Helen May Savitz expresses this thought:

> Being disabled is something the reader doesn't want to be. That's why it's difficult for him to relate. The trick to writing about it is for the character, the personality, or the charisma to overpower the disability for the reader. The reader then wants to identify with the goal of the individual and the emotions rather than the disability, which becomes secondary.[3]

Mrs. Savitz, who writes for grades 4-6, divulges practical problems of the disabled. In Fly, Wheels, Fly, she clarifies why wheelchair users need corner curbs graded leading to sidewalks, revolving doors eliminated, and phone booths widened. These issues are presented in a fascinating story about two teenagers, Jeff Cobb, paralyzed from birth, and Chuck Robbins, paralyzed from an accident, who are forced out of their reclusive world by a black recreation therapist, Joe Johnson. The tale combats racism, because Joe admirably leads preparations for the Paralympics (wheelchair sports).

As the example indicates, many books about the disabled tackle more than one area of sensitivity. Because they are doubly beneficial in bibliotherapy, the most attention has been given to them. They can strengthen the self-image of all readers, particularly constant complainers who suffer from the ailment of self-pity. If the mentally retarded do not benefit from books about them, their families might.

Here are sample selections covering a variety of disabilities on the theme:

The Disabled Overcome Problems

Mentally-alert exceptional persons seek independence; others need help.

Lower grades (grades K-2)

1. Fanshaw, Elizabeth. Rachel. Scarsdale, New York: Bradbury, 1975.

A young girl in a wheelchair is mainstreamed in school and is being raised in a liberated way to think of a variety of prospective occupations.

2. Fassler, Joan. Howie Helps Himself. Chicago: Albert Whitman, 1976.

Cerebral palsied Howie attends a special class and finally learns to push his own wheelchair.

3. Lasker, Joe. He's My Brother. Chicago: Albert Whitman, 1974.

A lad describes experiences of his slow-learning young brother in an unempathetic school and in a loving home.

Middle grades (grades 3-4)

4. Davidson, Margaret. Louis Braille, the Boy Who Invented Books for the Blind. New York: Hastings House, 1972.

Frenchman Louis Braille, blind himself, works for three years until he is fifteen to develop an alphabet which enables the blind to read.

5. Hickok, Lorena. The Story of Helen Keller. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1974.

Helped by her teacher, Annie Sullivan, blind and deaf Helen grows into a productive woman who helps others like herself.

6. Wagoner, Jean B. Jane Addams: Little Lame Girl. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1944.

Jane Addams, whose back is crooked, becomes a social worker and starts Chicago's Hull House.

Upper grades (grade 5 and beyond)

7. deAngeli, Marguerite. The Door in the Wall. New York: Doubleday, 1949.

With effort, Robin, crippled from polio, walks with crutches, becomes literate, and acquires patience.

8. Forbes, Esther. Johnny Tremain. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943.

During the American Revolution, a silversmith's apprentice, Johnny Tremain, is maimed but assists the rebels.

9. Little, Jean. Mine for Keeps. Boston: Little, Brown, 1962.

Cerebral palsied Sally, despite crutches and leg braces, begins to train her dog and helps a rheumatic fever victim who feels sorry for himself.

The problems of the disabled are convincingly stated in autobiography or biography. Those who have actually jumped personal hurdles to win self-esteem often speak more effectively than fictional characters.

A good example is the blind singer and pianist, Tom Sullivan, whose words are recorded by Derek Gill for readers beyond fourth grade in Tom Sullivan's Adventures in Darkness. While he has appeared as a musician on the Johnny Carson, Dinah Shore, Merv Griffin, and Mike Douglas shows, Sullivan is a sports enthusiast. He golfs, water skis, rides horseback, and skydives.

Sullivan has had to muster courage constantly. For example, it took guts for him at the age of fourteen to remain in his first big wrestling match when the audience was laughing. The nervous youth had put his school uniform on inside out with the label dangling from the seat of his pants which read, "Machine wash, tumble dry."

It took a vastly different kind of courage for Anne Frank, a Jewish adolescent in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam, during World War II, to hide for two years with seven others. The only survivor was her father, Otto Frank. He later returned to their hiding place and found Anne's diary, which was published under the title, Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl.

A pupil in my 1964-1965 fourth-grade class was deeply moved by Anne's words. Pig-tailed, precocious Sue, who had been reading since she was three, had been undergoing an identity crisis and wanted to know more

about her people when she seized that book. She was feverish after she saw Anne's father on television. She wanted to ask him for the addresses of Anne's Dutch friends so she could thank them for the risks they had taken. I suggested that she write Otto Frank, care of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

On January 15, 1965, Sue received a reply in English from Europe. Otto Frank gave her the requested addresses, and she faithfully sent them letters translated by a Dutch colleague of mine. Since Mr. Frank is now deceased, Sue framed his correspondence, which has this concluding paragraph:

> I hope that Anne's diary will have a lasting influence on you and will inspire you to think about what has happened in our time. All of us have to stand against persecution and discrimination on account of race and religion.

Concurring with Otto Frank is the Council on Interracial Books for Children in New York. They emphasize the importance of authentic biographies of members of minority groups to give members a feeling of self-worth and to help children generally enlarge their vistas. Heroes and heroines who overcome poverty and prejudice set an example for anyone still entrapped.

For those who suffer from poverty, prejudice, and enduring fears, here are a few books culled from a wide panorama. There are many ways to categorize titles, and theme assignment is sometimes arbitrary, but what seems appropriate in this case is:

Courage

Fear must be conquered with confidence.

Lower grades (grades K-2)

1. Daugherty, James. Andy and the Lion. New York: Viking, 1938.

Andy wins a bravery medal when a circus lion friend escapes.

Middle grades (grades 3-4)

2. Bishop, Claire. Twenty and Ten. New York: Viking, 1952.

Twenty French children led by nuns protect ten Jewish children during World War II.

3. Dalgliesh, Alice. The Courage of Sarah Nobel. New York: Scribner's 1952.

In 1707, eight-year-old Sarah serves as her father's cook when he is building a wilderness home. Native Americans become her friends.

Upper grades (grade 5 and beyond)

4. Hamilton, Virginia. Paul Robeson, the Life and Times of a Free Black Man. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

The son of an ex-slave, Paul Robeson, athlete, scholar, singer, and actor is seen struggling as a youth, in the height of his popularity, and in his last years, always working for equality.

5. Petry, Ann. Harriet Tubman, Conductor on the Underground Railroad. New York: Crowell, 1955.

Harriet Tubman is a Moses who leads 300 slaves from Maryland to freedom, despite a head injury which causes unpredictable sleeping spells.

6. Wojciechowska, Maia. Shadow of a Bull. New York: Atheneum, 1964.

With difficulty, Manolo Olivar refuses to become a matador like his famous deceased father and decides on his own future occupation.

Many biographies could be included under the courage theme. Some that are easy to read are rather shallow. Since the stories of those who have made a major contribution to society give strength to children, emphasis should be placed on storytelling to lower grades portions of more sophisticated biographies that they cannot yet read. The more mature biography should be displayed as the source of information in case interested pupils want it in the future.

I discovered the effectiveness of this approach by accident. When my second-grade pupils were at recess one day, I was reading Shirley Graham's adult biography of Frederick Douglass, There Was Once a Slave. Tears were streaming down my face when the class came back after their break. They

wanted to know why, so I told them how Graham's writing affected me, holding the volume tenderly for them to see. "Tell us the part that's making you cry," they insisted. I responded, for it concerned how intensely Douglass wanted to learn to read, knowledge forbidden to slaves.

Sturdy Richard with dark hair and brown button eyes never forgot the second-grade incident. When he entered seventh grade, he phoned me for the name of "that book," assisting me to recall what had taken place five years earlier. He said he was beginning to doubt the importance of school and thought Douglass, who valued learning so much, could help him. I did not hesitate to give him the title.

It was rewarding when my valentine mail that year included a card from Richard. He wrote that he benefited from the book and would call me for other titles if he felt blue again. Then he closed with words in code, attaching a deciphering key. His secret message was: "Happy Valentine's Day!"

This incident highlights the fact that pupils will set future reading goals for themselves, storing remembrances of books until they can enjoy them independently. It even works with preschoolers. In kindergartens, I show a picture book I am storytelling and circulate it, motivating children to want to learn to read it later.

Recently, when there was bickering between Puerto Ricans and Blacks in an inner-city kindergarten, I promised to storytell an African folk tale to bolster black pride. (Another day, I shared a Latin American story.) After passing around Joan Lexau's Crocodile and Hen, I first told the tale in Spanish to the Puerto Ricans. Then I repeated it in English to the entire class. I told it as a sound story, which means children responded to cues in the narration with body sounds and motions and with rhythm

instrumen.s. The relationship between groups improved as they listened to a friendship tale of black origin and rubbed elbows to "orchestrate" it.

There is a perpetual need to emphasize the following theme:

Friendship

It is a joy to share experiences with an understanding companion.

Lower grades (grades K-2)

1. Lexau, Joan. Crocodile and Hen. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

In an African folk tale, a friendship develops between unlikely animals.

2. Lobel, Arnold. Frog and Toad Are Friends. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

When Toad complains he never gets mail, Frog writes him. A snail takes four days to deliver the letter while the two friends await it. This is one of five droll, tender stories.

3. Udry, Janice May. Let's Be Enemies. New York: Harper and Row, 1961.

Five-year-old John is angry with James until the sun appears. Then once again, they resume being fast friends.

Middle grades (grades 3-4)

4. Smith, Doris Buchanan. A Taste of Blackberries. New York: Crowell, 1973.

When his best friend, Jamie, dies of a bee sting, a boy feels guilty but goes to the funeral and later picks blackberries to share with Jamie's mother.

5. Steptoe, John. Stevie. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

While Robert's mother babysits in her home for Stevie, Robert looks upon him as a pest. When Stevie leaves, Robert realizes they were actually friends.

6. Wilde, Oscar. The Happy Prince. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

A swallow, loyal to the statue of the Prince, helps those in need at the Prince's request. The swallow stays until frigid winter begins and freezes to death next to his friend.

Upper grades (grade 5 and beyond)

7. Baker, Betty. Walk the World's Rim. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

In the fictional group with Cabeza de Vaca in the Southwest are two friends, Esteban, a black slave of a Spaniard, and Chakoh, an Avavare Native American lad.

8. Greene, Bette. The Summer of My German Soldier. New York: Dial, 1973.

Unloved by her family, a twelve-year-old Jewish girl, Patty, in a small Arkansas town, befriends a German prisoner of war in World War II and pays a bitter price.

9. White, E. B. Charlotte's Web. New York: Harper and Row, 1952.

Pig Wilbur is hysterical when he learns he will be slaughtered as soon as he is fat enough His friend, spider Charlotte, saves him by spinning complimentary words about him in her web.

Changes in family relationships, such as the separation of parents, can cause children to withdraw from friends. Recently, in keeping with the increase in divorces, there has been a wave of books that stress the problems when one parent moves out of the household. Examples are Rose Blue's A Month of Sundays and Peggy Mann's My Dad Lives in a Downtown Hotel. These titles are helpful for children whose parents are apart, because readers find their own emotions and adjustment needs are common. It is not therapeutic, however, for them to read literature of despair involving child characters deserted by both parents.

If youngsters suffer from sibling rivalry, they can find reading matter that identifies with them. There are titles that express jealousy over a new baby, contempt over being followed by a kid brother, or the opposite viewpoint when a younger brother gives revenge plans, and even the woes of being a middle child.

Below are a few selections on:

Family Living

Those under the same roof often feel loyalty towards each other.

Lower grades (grades K-2)

1 Adoff, Arnold. Black Is Brown Is Tan. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

A racially-mixed family of three generations enjoys doing things together.

2. Keats, Ezra Jack. Peter's Chair. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

A young lad, previously resentful of his baby sister, gives her the chair he has outgrown.

3. Wasson, Valentina. The Chosen Baby. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1950.

Young children can understand this explantion of adoption.

Middle grades (grades 3-4)

4. Blue, Rose. Grandma Didn't Wave Back. New York: Watts, 1972.

Debbie watches her grandmother age and has the painful experience of seeing her in a nursing home.

5. Klein, Norma. Confessions of an Only Child. New York: Pantheon, 1974.

Nine-year-old Antonia (Toe) helps her father do laundry and give the baby his nighttime bottle, because her mother is in law school.

6. Mathis, Sharon Bell. The Hundred Penny Box. New York: Viking, 1975.

A young boy and his hundred-year-old aunt love each other and treasure an old box that has a penny for each year of the aunt's life.

7. Shearer, John. I Wish I Had an Afro. Chicago: Cowles, 1970.

Three members of the McDaniels family speak of concern for one another.

Upper grades (grade 5 and beyond)

8. Burch, Robert. Queenie Peavy. New York: Viking, 1966.

Lanky, eighth-grade Queenie, taunted because her father is in the penitentiary, is supported by her mother, a cannery worker.

9. Cameron, Eleanor. A Room Made of Windows. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971.

Julia selfishly wants to prevent her mother's remarriage.

10. Krumgold, Joseph. . . . and Now Miguel. New York: Crowell, 1953.

Miguel, in the closely-knit Chavez family, yearns to be considered man enough to take the sheep to the mountains in the summer.

A child's self-image can change as he or she matures. The young child is often paralyzed by fears of darkness, monsters, lightning and thunder, getting lost, moving, and even trains. Angry moods can lead to temporary desires to run away or spats with a friend. There are picture books that reflect all of these problems and ease the stigma of wearing eyeglasses or being "a late bloomer."

No matter what the reader's size or shape, there are tailor-made books.

"Bean Poles" and "Treetops," short and fat, young and old readers will find characters who match themselves physically and adjust or suggest self-improvement programs.

Maturing girls see themselves in Judy Blume's Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, which discusses menstruation and first "bras" frankly, and boys find nocturnal emissions mentioned in her Then Again, Maybe I Won't. In addition to fictional and nonfictional treatments of physical development, young people can read stirring literature about preadolescents and adolescents who assume adult responsibilities.

Some sample books, which should be particularly helpful in improving self-image, revolve around the theme:

Growing Up

As one matures, there are adjustments and responsibilities.

Lower grades (grades K-2)

1. Kraus, Robert. Leo the Late Bloomer. New York: Windmill Books, 1971.

Leo the lion can't do anything right until one day he "blooms."

2. Sendak, Maurice. Where the Wild Things Are. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

Max defies his mother and is punished for being a "wild thing." He is reconciled with her after he dreams he is king of the wiid things.

3. Viorst, Judith. Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. New York: Atheneum, 1972.

Everything goes wrong for Alexander, so he wants to escape to Australia.

4. Wagner, Jane. J. T. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969.

A Harlem boy learns how cruel bullies can be to his pet cat. Growing up for him involves learning to assess people.

5. Wise, William. The Cowboy Surprise. New York: Putnam's, 1961.

Two children, teased because they wear glasses, find their glasses a status symbol when a cowboy performer visits their town.

Upper grades (grade 5 and beyond)

6. Fritz, Jean. Brady. New York: Coward-McCann, 1960

Brady, who previously could not keep a secret, matures enough to transfer a slave to the next Underground Railway station when his agent father is incapacitated.

7. Kerr, M. E. Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Fifteen-year-old Dinky (Susan) eats when she is blue. Her mother helps drug addicts but discourages her obese daughter from joining Weight Watchers.

8. Kingman, Lee. The Year of the Raccoon. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966.

Adolescent Joey suffers by comparison with his pianist older brother and scientific-minded younger one, but he is the most unselfish household member. He discovers he must find his own future occupation despite parental pressure.

Because of limited space, I have made only choice suggestions from a lengthy list of sensitive books to strengthen readers. "Bon appetit" to all child consumers of this "soul food!"

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